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A. MARSHALL ELLIOTT

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By the death of A. Marshall Elliott the Modern Language Association has lost its founder and first Secretary, the teacher of some of its foremost members, and a friend whose ample erudition, unflagging enthusiasm, and genial kindness were a potent influence in developing in America those studies and that fellowship among scholars which the Association aims to foster.

Of English Quaker stock first settled in Pennsylvania, but early removed to the South, he was born in North Carolina, the son of Aaron and Rhoda Mendenhall Elliott. His childhood was spent near Elizabeth City. After completing his secondary education at the New Garden Boarding School, he left the South to attend Haverford College, where he was graduated in 1866. A year was then spent in teaching in his boyhood's school. Leaving his native state, whither he never returned for any prolonged stay, he

entered Harvard College in the autumn of 1867 as a member of the Senior class. His instructors were Krauss, Cutler, Torrey, Bowen, Peabody, and Lovering. Upon receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts with high rank (he was third in his class), he started for Europe as a private tutor, and remained abroad, pursuing various studies in many countries, for the greater part of eight years. In Paris he attended lectures at the Collège de France and the École des Hautes Études. On the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 he had a thrilling experience in escaping from the metropolis on the day before its investiture by the German army. For a couple of years he busied himself with Sanskrit and other things in Florence. In 1873 he was diligently applying himself to the acquisition of Arabic at the University of Madrid. Spain was the scene of another exciting adventure, his capture and rough treatment by a band of Carlists. The next year found him in Germany, where he devoted himself to the Oriental languages at the universities of Tübingen, Vienna, and Munich until the autumn of 1876. It was during this formative period of his life that he laid the broad foundation for his linguistic attainments. At one time he was able to speak Russian and Modern Greek; he was familiar with Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian; he became acquainted with the chief languages of western Europe and with many of the Romance dialects. Later he added Rumanian and Rætian, as well as Canadian French, and continued his investigations of many local forms of speech.

Early in 1876 he began to correspond with Dr. Daniel C. Gilman, the first President of the Johns Hopkins University; and on June 5, 1876, he was appointed an Associate for Languages in the newly founded institution, in whose service the remainder of his life was to be spent. At first it was his intention to devote himself to the Eastern

tongues, but he very soon relinquisht this project and turned his attention to the Romance field. An evidence of the transitional stage is to be found in the title of the first paper which he read before the Johns Hopkins Philological Association early in 1878 : *Do the Romance Languages bear the same relation to the Latin that the modern Prakrit dialects do to Sanskrit ?* Romance studies were then, as is well known, in a discouraging state in America, and it was necessary for Elliott to do much pioneer work at the beginning of his professorial career. At first, in addition to his guidance of older students, he gave instruction in French to undergraduates ; but he was soon able to transfer this task to his assistants and give himself entirely to graduate courses. It was not until 1881 that the first doctor's degree was granted to a Romance scholar at the University ; but Elliott lived to see the fiftieth such degree bestowed on one of his pupils nearly thirty years later. His fondness for travel never forsook him : he crost the ocean more than sixty times, and spent in all some forty summers in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Of an eminently social disposition, and prized both for his talents and for his never-failing cheerfulness, he was a member of an extraordinary number of clubs and other organizations. At the end of 1883 the Modern Language Association was founded, and for nine years (1884-92) he labored, as its Secretary and editor of its *Publications*, to make it a worthy organ of American scholarship. He was President of the Association in 1894. In 1900 he was an official delegate to the Paris Exposition, and in 1907 the French government awarded him the Cross of the Legion of Honor. Various honorary degrees were conferred on him by American institutions of learning. When, in his last years, disease came upon him, he visited several health resorts ; his last summer was spent in Atlantic City, after nearly six months' stay in

the Johns Hopkins Hospital. Finally, in October, 1910, he returned to Baltimore to die in his own home.

During his long academic career he taught a great variety of subjects. Persian poetry, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Rumanian were treated by him. For many years he lectured on popular Latin as a background for Romance developments, and followed this up by extended comparisons of the usage of Old, Middle, and Modern French. Annually he gave a course on the dialects of northern France, and occasionally also on the Italian dialects. His Dante lectures, broad in scope, were regularly delivered for many years. The science of phonetics was practically taught in connection with French pronunciation, and linguistic ethnography came in for a share of his attention. In his seminary he in the early period of his service examined a number of the oldest French texts; then for nineteen years he concentrated his attention on the preparation of a critical edition of the *Fables* of Marie de France, projected on a monumental scale. This work he left only half completed. For seven years he also conducted a pro-seminary in which the lay of the *Bisclavret* by Marie de France was made the basis of a comparative study of French syntax and etymology. In his study of this Old French authoress he ranged far in the field of comparative literature. Genealogical researches, in connection with the two branches of his own family, occupied much of his time. For twenty-five years he edited *Modern Language Notes*. Some fifty articles were contributed by him to various periodicals. He accumulated a library of about five thousand books and pamphlets, which he bequeathed to the Romance Seminary. At the same time he founded a Romance scholarship. In the last year of his life active work was begun by his pupils on a volume of studies in his honor, which is now in press.

Such a volume is indeed the most fitting monument to one who, in the midst of many cares and occupations, always gave the best of himself to his students, in whose welfare he never ceased to be actively interested. The achievements of his former pupils and their affectionate regard for him bear sufficient witness to the success of his labor.
